

Young Australians would use cannabis if it were legal to do so

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A number of young Australians say they would use cannabis for the first time if it were legal, a UQ study has found.

Researchers from UQ's National Centre for Youth Substance Use Research and the School of Psychology used [survey data](#) from more than

3,000 adolescents and [young adults](#) to estimate how many might consider using the drug if it was legally available.

Study lead Dr. Janni Leung said the potential for increased [cannabis](#) use by young people remained a key concern of opponents of a change in the law.

"Support for legalizing recreational use of cannabis has increased in high-income populations around the world, including Australia," Dr. Leung said.

"Our study showed that 13 percent of adolescents (aged 12-17) and 15 percent of young adults (aged 18-25) would try cannabis if it were legal.

"Of these, 85 percent of the adolescents and 59 percent of the young adults said they had never used cannabis before.

"While most young Australians did not intend to use the drug, we have a substantial minority who say they would try it for the first time if it were legal to do so.

"In addition, [young people](#) who have used cannabis before expressed their intention to increase their use if it were allowed by law."

Dr. Leung said the legalization of cannabis for recreational use should be accompanied by public health resources to discourage use during adolescence and inform the public about the risks of regular [cannabis use](#).

"Our study gives policymakers and health service providers a glimpse of the potential impacts of cannabis legalization on adolescents and young adults in Australia," she said.

"This data could be used to inform and plan for public health interventions, treatment services, educational campaigns, and regulations needed for jurisdictions that have adopted or are considering legalizing cannabis for recreation use."

Provided by University of Queensland

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